

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BANGKO 03696 051553Z

62

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1316

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ID, CB, TH

SUBJ: ACTIVITIES OF SIHANOUK'S ON IN BANGKOK

REF: BANGKOK 3518

1. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, KOSON SINTHAWANON, TOLD THE DCM MARCH 4 THAT THE RTG HAD INDEED PLAYED THE ROLE OF A MIDDLEMAN IN GETTING SIHANOUK'S ON YUVANEATH IN TOUCH WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT. KOSON SAID THE MINISTRY HAD DOUBTS ABOUT YUVANEATH'S BONA FIDES. HE HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING A PLAYBOY AND VERY MUCH AN INTELLECTUAL LIGHTWEIGHT. HOWEVER, HE CLAIMED TO BE SIHANOUK'S PRIVATE SECRETARY AND ASKED FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF THE RTG IN ARRANGING CONTACT WITH THE GKR. THE THAI SAW NOTHING TO LOSE BY HELPING OUT, DESPITE THEIR RESERVATIONS ABOUT YUVANEATH'S ABILITIES.

2. AS A RESULT, THE THAI ARRANGED FOR A CAMBODIAN TO TRAVEL FROM PHNOM PENH TO THAILAND TO CONSULT WITH YUVANEATH. KOSON WAS NOT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN OF THE CAMBODIAN'S NAME BUT SAID IT WAS SOMETHING LIKE "PONGCHAN". THIS INDIVIDUAL AND YUVANEATH MET PRIVATELY IN A LOCAL HOTEL, AND THE RTG WAS NOT INFORMED ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THEIR DISCUSSIONS.

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3. KOSON SAID THAT YUVANEATH WOULD LEAVE BANGKOK TODAY

(MARCH 4) BUT AT HIS REQUEST THE RTG HAD AGREED THAT HIS GRANDMOTHER AND HIS CHILDREN COULD STAY IN THAILAND FOR ABOUT TWO MONTHS. (THIS INFORMATION CONFLICTS WITH THAT IN PARA 2, REFTEL.)

4. KOSON CONFIRMED THAILAND'S BASIC POLICY TOWARD CAMBODIA AS ONE IN WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD DEAL WITH ANY GROUP IN POWER IN PHNOM PENH WHICH WAS NOT HOSTILE TO THAILAND. THE THAI WOULD CERTAINLY NOT WELCOME SIHANOUK BACK TO POWER AND DID NOT BELIEVE HE COULD CONTROL THE VARIOUS COMMUNIST FACTIONS. IF SIHANOUK SHOULD RETURN THROUGH POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS, KOSON SPECULATED THAT HE WOULD BE ONLY A FIGUREHEAD AND THAT HE WOULD SOON BE REPLACED AS LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT BY KHIEU SAMPHAN. ASKED WHETHER LON NOL WOULD INDEED STEP DOWN TO FACILITATE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, THE DCM QUOTED WHAT LON NOL HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID PUBLICLY ON THIS MATTER AND SAID WE HAD NO REASON TO BELIEVE HE WAS NOT SINCERE.
KINTNER

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